

Monthly Newsletter

FAMILY TIMES

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Moore Public Schools
MENTAL HEALTH TEAM



Caregiver Corner

by Rendy Janssen, LMFT

Routines for children, and adults, offer many different benefits. Routines create safety, predictability, and accessibility. Children feel safe when they know what to expect and predictability makes it so that children can easily participate in family routines (such as setting the table for dinner). Research has shown that children who have routines at home master self-regulation earlier and faster, which is a building block to good mental health. Routines can also create the ability to form connections with other family members.

In addition, routines can also create space for family rituals. Rituals do not have to be elaborate; it can simply be Saturday Movie Night, Taco Tuesday, or Friday night pizza. These rituals create a sense of belonging and connectedness to the family unit. Movie night, for example, does not have to be elaborate, but many times once we name something it creates a sense of specialness to it for all involved. Research has shown rituals can help shield children from the effects of stress and trauma on their mental health.

Take time to reinforce existing routines, or perhaps create new routines, in your house this year.

Sources: Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center, Zero to Thrive, Raising Children

Community Events

by Elizabeth Asplin, CTRS/L

September

- 16th 7:00pm: Outdoor Movies at Lions Park, Norman
- 17th 3:00pm: India Food and Arts Festival at the Myriad Gardens, OKC
- 17th 9:30 am: National Cleanup Day: Chisholm Trail Park-Yukon, OK.
- 24th 2:00pm: Bake with me-Baking class at the Tabernacle Baptist Church, OKC



Mental Health Discussion

By Summer King, LPC & LADC/MH

Emotional Backpack:

As we start back to school we are often aware of all the things that our students need in order to be successful and even get a listing of all the school supplies they will need to start the year off right. One area that we don't often get much assistance is what our children bring with them everywhere they go in their emotional backpack. An emotional backpack is an invisible bag that holds your life's experiences and we want to help you fill that with positive experiences. We all have the weight of life's

experiences that we bring with us to any situation. Our role as the caregiver in our student's life is to ensure we have strong emotional health in our own backpack to help prepare our students. This toolkit can help during any new challenges they may face as the school year begins and set them on the road to success. Parents can assist in their child's emotional growth through 1) Being consistent 2) Listening 3) Making time for play 4) Develop self-esteem 5) Get fresh air and exercise 6) Give children unconditional love.

Source: mhahouston.org



Family Connections

By Elizabeth Asplin, CTRS/L

Go Stargazing with your Family: Find a place near by that is dark enough outside to see the stars. Grab a big blanket and lay down and observe the night sky. Fun questions to ask your child: "How many can you count? Do you see any shapes? What would you name a star if you could and why?"

Wear Matching Outfits with your Kiddo: Find a day that you and your child can match outfits. Maybe it's head-to-toe identical clothing or just wearing a stripe shirt that looks similar. Snap a picture if you can and enjoy matching the coolest kid you know!

Read a Book Together: Have your child pick out their favorite book, sit down and read. If your child can read, you can practice taking turns!



Academic Tools to Support Learning

By Katy Creecy, MSW, LCSW

One of the best ways to help your child succeed this school year is by partnering with their teacher and other school staff as early as possible. If you have not already met your child's teacher, find a way to introduce yourself and start the conversation. Let them know that you are interested in ways to help your child succeed and would like to know about any issues that may arise. Share any helpful information about your child (e.g. likes, dislikes, strengths, challenges). Get to know other key staff in the building who regularly interact with your child. Find out who your child's favorite adults are in the building and send them an encouraging note. By partnering with your child's school and continuing strong communication, you are showing them that their education is a priority and that you are invested with them.

Source: ¡Colorín Colorado!



A new school year means new beginnings, new adventures, new friendships, and new challenges. The slate is clear and anything can happen." -Denise Witmer

D.I.F.Y– Do It For Yourself

by Davene Findlay-Williams, MSW, LCSW

Back to School Blues: The start of a new school year can be a source of stress for both parents and kids. If you are a parent or caregiver who's experiencing a little extra stress at the beginning of a new school year, you're not alone. In fact, your feelings are more common than you may think—especially if your kids are younger or attending a new school. Here are a few ideas to help alleviate some of that stress:

- Try being proactive about back-to-school meetings with teachers or administrators
- Start establishing new routines in the days leading up to the beginning of the school year.
- Remember you can't control the school experience for your kids. "You can only control how you respond to it."

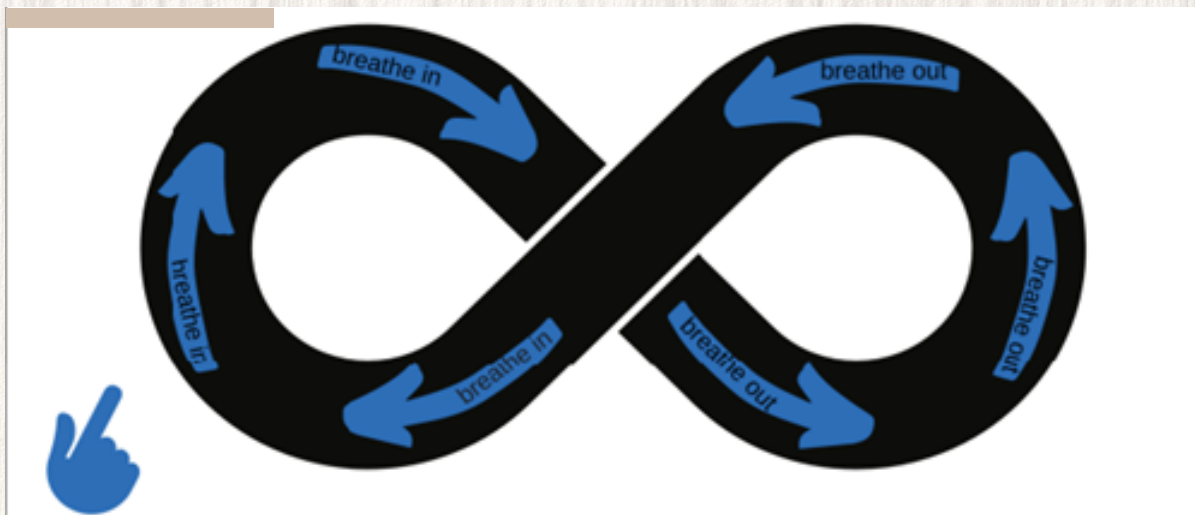
** And most importantly take time for yourself when your child is in school, at least an hour of relaxation and rest.



Lazy 8 Breathing

by Elizabeth Asplin, CTRS/L

Starting on the left side of the Lazy 8, follow the arrows with your finger as you breathe in and out. Repeat at least 3–5 times or until challenging feelings have subsided.



BROCCOLI CHEESE CUPS



Ingredients:

- 3 cups cooked and chopped broccoli
- 1 large egg
- 12 Ritz crackers (crushed)
- 1 heaping cup of cheddar cheese (plus more for topping)
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp salt

Directions:

1. Preheat your oven to 375 degrees.
2. In a medium size bowl, mix all of the ingredients together until well incorporated.
3. Generously grease a mini muffin tin and evenly distribute the mixture into about 16 of your muffin tin cups.
4. Use your fingers to squish the mixture down so that it's well compacted.
5. Top with more cheese and bake in the center rack for 14-16 minutes or until the cheese starts to brown.
6. Let them cool for at least 5 minutes before removing them from the pan.
7. Serve alone or with a little ranch or ketchup for dipping.
8. Store any leftovers in the fridge for up to 3 days.

Source: [The Lazy Dish](#)



Tech Talk

By Taylor Wright, LPC-NCC

When we are talking about the use of technology among our children, we can't just look at a one-size-fits-all solution as children grow. We must consider how much media we are okay with our children seeing and what is appropriate. When coming up with rules for your children, consider using the same rules in your child's virtual world that you use in their actual world. Remembering that the quality of the media that your child is exposed to is more significant than the technology used, or the quantity of time spent on it. Playing with your child, teaching them kindness, getting involved, and getting to know your children's friends and what they do can help you stay aware and be proactive in the content and media that your child is being exposed to. With technology there are both positive and negative effects that it can have on children. Being aware of those pros and cons can help you as the parent make informed decisions about the technology use you are okay with your children partaking in.

Some of the positive effects technology can have on children are:

- *It's a source of expansive knowledge.* Many children's books on the internet can assist a child in expanding their knowledge. It helps them to become independent learners and acquire confidence.
- *It can improve their problem-solving skills.*
- *It can build social interactions through social networking platforms.* They can stay in touch with friends and family, make new acquaintances, and exchange ideas.
- *It can enhance their creativity.*

Some of the negative effects technology can have on children are:

- *It can cause emotional and behavioral issues.* The online world can be a breeding ground for hate. The internet provides an opportunity for children to be emotionally tormented. Children and teenagers can use technology and social media to bully other kids without even meeting them.
- *It can be cause for safety concerns and exposure to explicit content.* This is the most alarming effect of children's unsupervised technology use. The amount of explicit information available on the internet is surprising. Children with unsupervised access to technology will as a result have much easier access to information and media content that is inappropriate and damaging to the child's mind.
- *It can reduce sleep quality.* Because of portable devices like smartphones and tablets, children now have access to media content at any time of day. Sleep is necessary for physical and mental health. A good night's sleep helps children develop, improves their heart health, impacts their weight, increases their attention span, and even helps them study.
- *It can reduce physical activity which can promote a more unhealthy lifestyle.* Children who spend more time on a screen spend less time outside or partaking in physical activities which can lead to several health issues, including obesity, coronary heart disease, and type 2 diabetes.
- *It can weaken social skills.* Social skills are knowing things like when to take turns in discussions, reading and using facial expressions, and making good eye contact. Continuous use of technological devices can restrict the development of basic interaction skills.

While technology can positively benefit children, too much exposure can have harmful consequences. These are less likely to occur with proper supervision, setting boundaries and time limits, and having meaningful conversations about the things your child is seeing, hearing, and watching using their technology. By providing a balanced day for your child with supervising their social time, screen time, and physical activity, technology can be used as a positive resource in your children's lives.

Source: [Cyberwise.org](#)

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